

**Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee**  
**Minutes for April 16, 2003**  
*Third Wednesday of the Month*

Members present: Art Albrecht, Shelley Baker, Richard Baugh, Greg Coffman, Jim Huffman, Rudy Propst, Les Bolt, Joe Fitzgerald, Deb Stevens, Dorn Peterson, Robert Steere, Carl Wassum, and David Wiens.

Members absent: Kathy Sarver, Reg Foucar-Szocki.

Staff / consultants present: Stacy Turner, Director of Planning and Community Development; Earl W. Anderson, Senior Planner; and Keith Markel, Planner.

Chairman Huffman called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

The first order of business was to reschedule the April 23 meeting. Staff will be out of town that day at a planning conference. It was decided that the meeting would take place the following week, Wednesday, April 30. That meeting will be devoted to the creation of goals and objectives. Ms. Kilby will not be present at that meeting. The following Wednesday, May 7, there will be another CPAC meeting to discuss the transportation memorandum. Both meetings will be in the second floor conference room of the Municipal Building and will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Huffman then asked if Ms. Kilby would adjust the agenda, so that her presentation on the existing City Comprehensive Plan that was cut from the last meeting be presented first.

Ms. Kilby gave a brief history of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan and its 1998 update. She commented that the 1998 version was mostly a reprint of the 1991 plan with updated statistical information. She shared two other Comprehensive Plans that she has worked on for other localities, one for the larger City of Lynchburg, and one for the town of Steven City. The two plans served as examples of how fancy or simple the final product could be produced. The Lynchburg plan had color pages and was kept in a three ring binder so items could be changed out. The Steven City plan was much more simple with black and white pages that could be easily photocopied.

Ms. Kilby said that the main goal needs to be making a plan that is user friendly. Comprehensive Plans that focus too much on tables and data figures tend to be used less than those plans that are simple, easy to understand documents that have clear goals and objectives. For larger plans it is good to have executive summaries that can capture the major issues and intent of the Comprehensive Plan. Many times this is all that most of the general public wants. The more detailed information that was used to arrive at the goals and objectives of the plan can be stored at the Community Development office for the public to review. It is also important to have the Comprehensive Plan web based so it can be accessed by anyone on the Internet, however, this cannot replace the need for hard copies of the plan. Finally, the end of the Comprehensive Plan should spell out in clear detail the goals for the coming years as established by the Comprehensive Plan and the order / priority of each goal. This will give direction to the plan and make it clear to the governing body what the most important issues are.

Ms. Kilby said that the current Zoning Ordinance seems to be doing a good job. The language appears to be clear enough to prevent many conflicts that other localities with more complicated ordinances typically face. An indicator of the adequacy of an ordinance can be determined by the number of variances that are requested annually. Because the City is not faced with a large number of variances, it appears that the ordinance is keeping up with the times and there are no major areas to rework. If changes were to be made, a few that have been marked for consideration. One issue is the over-occupancy of properties, especially rental homes. This is something that could be targeted with increased regulation in the ordinance. Another area involves mixed use development in specific areas

of the City. Currently there are areas where mixed uses are allowed, but many times these have not created the combination of residential and professional/commercial uses that could be generated in these areas.

Landscaping and lighting requirements may also be something the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee might want to take a look at.

Finally, street requirements such as limiting the creation of cul-de-sacs and subdivision issues such as allowing odd shaped lots could also be addressed.

Ms. Kilby then introduced Milton Herd of Herd Planning and Design. He is a consultant working on information for the City's public facilities report. His report included discussions on schools, the regional library, parks and recreational activities, police, fire and rescue, and city administration.

Following the presentation of his report, Mr. Steere asked if Mr. Herd knew what was going to happen to the current police station once they move their facilities to the renovated Harrison Plaza.

Mr. Herd said the building was in poor condition and would be hard to modify to make practical for future uses. Dr. Peterson said that the building would most likely be demolished to allow for the Sheriffs Department to expand their jail facility.

Dave Irvin then presented his report on the conditions of the water and sewer systems within the City. He said that overall the City is in good shape. He reviewed water and sewer demands and capacity limits. Mr. Coffman questioned the amount of water being allowed to the County if the water moratorium was lifted. The committee asked that this amount that could possibly be given to the County residents be included in the formula that showed how much available water was left for sale in the City. Another question that came up was the issue of water loss in the system. He said that the 16 percent loss was typical of a system of this age, and just one percent higher than the national average.

Ms. Kilby then reviewed the historical resources report. She pointed out that Harrisonburg is the only city or town between Winchester and Staunton that does not have a State or National Register-designated district. She said this might be something the committee would like to focus on.

Next she reviewed the environmental report and touched on the high points of the limestone geology of the City, the concern of high radon levels in the City and the types of pollution found in the streams that run through Harrisonburg.

Shelly Baker raised a concern over the failing terra cotta sewer pipes that connect many of the homes in Old Town to the sewer line in the street. She thinks the CPAC should make it a point to encourage the replacement of these older pipes when major street repair is being performed such as repaving or sidewalk replacement.

Finally, Ms. Kilby spent a few minutes explaining the different maps that have been generated by the City's GIS department showing topography, historical landmarks, and public facilities. She asked if there were any questions.

Chairman Huffman asked when CPAC would work on developing the future land use guide for the City.

Ms. Kilby said that she wanted to share all of these reports first. The next step is to create the goals for the new Comprehensive Plan. Then CPAC can start thinking about the future land use guide.

The next meeting of the CPAC will be on April 30, 2003 for the purpose of generating goals for the plan.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.